

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

NO. 892. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2, 1886.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

A STERN CHASE.

A STORY IN THREE PARTS.

By MRS. CASHEL HOEY.

THE SECOND PART.

CHAPTER VII. AN AGENT'S REPORT.

THE following letter, addressed to Colonel Courtland subsequently to his receipt of Dr. Rosslyn's telegram informing him of the futility of the enquiries sent from New York to Havana, was written by Mr. Walter Ritchie. That intelligent young gentleman, of no settled profession, but who was "looking about him", as he expressed it, was favourably known to Colonel Courtland, and had been recommended to Dr. Rosslyn by him as a fit and proper person to be sent to Cuba in search of information respecting Hugh :

"Santiago de Cuba.

"DEAR COLONEL COURTLAND,—I am writing by the present mail to Dr. Rosslyn, but I think it well, also, to make you acquainted with my proceedings so far. My first enquiry was addressed to the English Vice-Consul, and it produced no result whatever. Nothing was known of Mr. Hugh Rosslyn to that polite and no doubt capable official personally, and he was in a position to assure me also that nothing was known to the Consul-General at Havana, whom he had consulted, as instructed from New York by Mr. Gardiner. It had been supposed that Mr. Hugh Rosslyn had gone to Havana, but this proved not to be the case, and it soon became evident that from British official sources I had nothing to expect. I then had recourse to the Chief of Police, and found him a difficult person to get on with. He was plainly possessed by a fixed idea that Mr. Hugh Rosslyn was a criminal lost to

justice, to the detriment of the island, and the disparagement of its police, and that while I was endeavouring, from motives of a mixed nature (generally bad), to find him, I was also prepared to screen him from the offended majesty of the law, and the well-deserved penalty of his offences. This attitude of the police-official mind was too much for me; I could not contend with or accommodate it, and I cut my trespass on the chief's attention as short as possible. The sum of his actual knowledge was that Mr. Hugh Rosslyn had been seen in Santiago for a few days early in May; that he had fulfilled the customary formalities on his arrival; and that he had then suddenly disappeared, no one knew how or whither. The matter had not created much interest, apparently, in the official mind; no enquiries having been made, until Mr. Gardiner's message to the Vice-Consul led the latter to put himself in communication with the Chief of the Police. My coming after the message stirred the said official mind up to a most unwholesome energy, and I am convinced that I remain suspect of complicity with the unknown misdemeanour of the daring individual, who had ventured to quit the Ever Loyal and Faithful Island by some means unknown to and unrecognised by the lawful authorities.

"I was assisted by the Vice-Consul to the extent of his undertaking to ascertain where it was that Mr. Hugh Rosslyn had resided during his stay at Santiago. You will remember there was no information on this point contained in my instructions. The first item of direct evidence connected with Mr. Hugh Rosslyn's movements was that of the hotel-book; he had remained for one night only at the Reale; more was not known there. Only a few hours elapsed before the Vice-Consul

redeemed his promise. I received a note from him stating that it was at the house of Don Gualterio de las Turras, a painter of eminence, and, judging by the way in which I have since heard him spoken of, a great favourite in society as well, that Mr. Rosslyn had stayed. His house is in the Calle de Santa Rosa, and it has a fine view of the Bay—a choice situation for an artist. I presented myself at the house in the morning, having been assured that in Cuba I might do so with correctness—and was admitted by a smart, intelligent mulatto, who at once dashed my hopes by telling me that his master, Don Gualterio, was absent. He is, I am told, a great wanderer, and nobody appears to know exactly where he is at present; he was last heard of from St. Thomas. To return, however, to my mulatto. A few questions put to him satisfied me that the absence of Don Gualterio was not of such moment as it seemed, for the young man informed me that when the two English caballeros were staying at 'the camp'—as they called Don Gualterio's house—the erratic artist was away on his travels somewhere else, and had never seen Mr. Rosslyn. The other caballero—of course the person mentioned, but not named, in the letter of which Dr. Rosslyn provided me with an abstract—was well known to Don Gualterio and to my mulatto, a certain Mr. Rodney, who came from the United States, but whether he is an Englishman or an American by birth, the man could not tell me. It took a good deal of questioning to elicit so much as this, not from any ill will or disobligingness on the part of the servant, but from the natural discursiveness and idleness of his mind, although he was decidedly a 'smart' specimen. I need not trouble you with the details of my examination of this witness. The facts which I ascertained from the mulatto I have set down in order:

"Mr. Hugh Rosslyn resided with Mr. Rodney at the house of Don Gualterio de las Turras for a short time only. Exact dates, or a precise statement of the number of days, I could not obtain.

"The two gentlemen left the house on the same day; of this the mulatto was certain. Mr. Rodney's destination was St. Domingo. Of this the man was also sure; he heard it from Mr. Rodney himself. It was, therefore, to be presumed that Mr. Rosslyn also went to St. Domingo; but here a difficulty presented itself to me. A fact so easy

of verification would surely have been ascertained by the Vice-Consul at Santiago, before he replied to Mr. Gardiner's message from New York.

"Mr. Rodney's instructions to the man, on leaving, were that he expected to return in a few weeks. He also desired him to draw the attention of his master, Don Gualterio, on his return, to some books which were in the studio. He did not say whether Mr. Rosslyn would also come back to Santiago or not.

"Mr. Rodney had not returned from that time to the present; and, on Don Gualterio's again leaving home, he did not leave any orders with reference to Mr. Rodney, so that there was no reason for expecting his arrival. I asked the mulatto to let me see the studio, and this he did readily. It was the usual sort of place, very depressing and uncomfortable to the inartistic eye, but I have no doubt paradise to a painter; and there, on a dusty shelf, I found half-a-dozen books, with 'Hugh Rosslyn' written on the title-page of each. This told me nothing. I asked only a few more questions; among others, whether Mr. Rosslyn had done much painting in that studio? At this the mulatto grinned from ear to ear, and said he 'nebber' saw him painting; he was 'mos'ly' lying down and talking to Don Henrique, who was 'mos'ly' writing; but the other caballero went out early every morning. These trivial facts were all I learned by my inspection of the studio. I enquired whether Mr. Rosslyn was in good health when he left Santiago with Mr. Rodney, and the mulatto answered that he was quite well.

"With this slender addition to my previous knowledge I again invaded the Vice-Consul, who readily instructed me how to proceed in ascertaining the date at which Mr. Rodney—who is, he informed me, a correspondent of the New York Harbinger—left Cuba for St. Domingo. I need not trouble you with more than the result of my enquiry at the shipping-offices. Mr. Rodney left Santiago on board the Cristobal Colon, on the 20th May, but was not, so far as the office people know, accompanied by Mr. Hugh Rosslyn. The name does not appear on the books of the company, nor was any permit granted in it; but yet I am not satisfied that Mr. Rosslyn did not accompany Mr. Rodney. In the first place, there is the statement of Don Gualterio's servant that the two left the house in the Calle de Santa Rosa together, and also—this I ought sooner to have

mentioned—that the larger portion of Mr. Rosslyn's luggage had been previously removed by Mr. Rodney. Secondly, there is this significant fact: that some confusion prevails at the shipping-office with respect to the passengers by the Cristobal Colon. One of the clerks distinctly remembers the circumstance that a berth, which had been engaged for a certain merchant of Santiago, was given up by him a few hours before the sailing of the steamer, and that a substitute presented himself, who was unknown to the clerk, but whom he believes to have been an Englishman. You will gather from all this that I am unable at present to arrive at any solution of the enigma of Mr. Hugh Rosslyn's silence, and his disappearance from Santiago. The theory which presents itself to me as the most probable one is that he took a sudden resolution to accompany Mr. Rodney, whose going to St. Domingo, in the recent disturbed state of affairs there, is accounted for by his occupation, and that the usual strict formalities were dispensed with, either through favour or from hurry. Why Mr. Hugh Rosslyn has not communicated with his family from St. Domingo I am unable to guess; but of course his silence is a very legitimate cause for uneasiness, considering the state of that island. On this point I have had some conversation with the Vice-Consul, who thinks we might have considerable difficulty in tracing Mr. Rosslyn's fate, supposing any misfortune to have happened to him; but at the same time he is doubtful as to whether Mr. Rosslyn did accompany Mr. Rodney. I cannot see any other solution of his indisputable disappearance from Santiago, and consistent with the positive statement of the servant. Acting on an excellent suggestion of the Vice-Consul's, I returned to the Calle de Santa Rosa, and questioned the obliging mulatto respecting Mr. Rodney's friends and visitors; but I did not gain any information of value on those points. A number of people were in the habit of frequenting the studio prior to and during the short period of Mr. Rosslyn's stay, but my informant knew none of them, with the exception of Don Pepito Vinent, who seems to have been on intimate terms with Mr. Rodney, and is himself a very well known personage in the city. The mulatto mentioned him with so much chuckling and grinning that I concluded he must be a good fellow and a favourite. I easily discovered where Don

Pepito Vinent was to be found, and sent a note to his address, asking permission to call upon him, adding that I had recently come to Santiago for the purpose of making certain enquiries, in which I had reason to believe he could be of material assistance to me. This note I sent by a messenger, who was instructed to wait for an answer. He brought me a disappointing one. Don Pepito Vinent had gone to Havana, and was not expected to return until the end of this month. I have therefore been obliged to address my enquiries to him by letter, and I am anxiously awaiting his reply, while, with the assistance of the Vice-Consul, I am endeavouring to obtain information from St. Domingo.

"In reference to the young lady to whom Mr. Hugh Rosslyn refers in his first (and last) letter from Cuba, I am unable as yet to say anything, hampered as I am by the restrictions laid upon me by yourself and Dr. Rosslyn, and rendered more onerous by all which I have been able to learn or observe of the habits and manners of the people here. In no instance in which I have mentioned the two English gentlemen, who were undoubtedly well known here, has any reference been made to a lady. From what I have learned, as positive information, and taking that in connection with the statements in Mr. Hugh Rosslyn's last letter, I think if I succeed in ascertaining that he left Santiago for St. Domingo in company with Mr. Rodney, we may reasonably conclude that he tried his luck with the young lady, and failed. In that case his remaining so short a time in the island would be accounted for; in any other way it is inexplicable. There is nothing more for me to do in the way of direct enquiry until I have received from St. Domingo the information for which I have applied, and also Don Pepito Vinent's answer to my communication.

"Thanks to the polite attention of the Vice-Consul, I have made acquaintance with some pleasant people here, and I have seen most of the city. Should I be so fortunate as to hear from St. Domingo in time to convey by the next mail information that Mr. Hugh Rosslyn is or has been there, I think you will arrive at the same conclusion that I have reached—viz, that his strange silence has been caused by disappointment with regard to the aforesaid young lady. If I do not learn that he is at St. Domingo, or that he has been there, I shall consider the matter to bear a sinister

complexion, for he has certainly vanished from Cuba without leaving a trace behind."

(Written a week later, and on the eve of the departure of the mail):

"I resume my pen under circumstances so different that I should perhaps do more wisely to suppress all the foregoing portion of my report, and begin my narrative with the new and unexpected incidents that have just occurred. I shall, however, allow what I have written to remain, as in it I have advanced as a supposition that which I am now convinced is a fact.

"In the first place, the answers returned to enquiries made at St. Domingo are unsatisfactory. The state of affairs there at the time when Mr. Rodney must have arrived was such, that all the general rules were relaxed and the ordinary customs were abandoned. Confusion was reigning, and it has proved impossible to ascertain whether he had any companion on his arrival. Concerning his departure, my information is precise. Mr. Rodney, who had been suffering from an attack of fever, was taken on board an American vessel, the *Washington*, bound for New York, six weeks after his arrival at the island. There was no one with him. I now come to the answer made to my enquiry by Don Pepito Vinent, and firstly I have to tell you that it was given in person.

"Yesterday morning, when I had begun to feel surprised that even in 'the country of to-morrow' there should be so much delay in replying to so urgent an appeal, Don Pepito Vinent's card was brought to me. I went at once to the sala, and there I found a little man, very wiry, vivacious, and restless, with very bright coal-black eyes, a dark olive skin, and the punctiliously polite manners by which the best class of people here is distinguished. He entered upon the subject of my enquiries at once, and explained that he had thought it well to return to Santiago a few days earlier rather than to answer them by letter only. I need not repeat the preliminaries of our conversation; he earnestly expressed his regret at the circumstances which had brought me to Cuba, and I fully explained my errand to him, adding the particulars of the information which I had succeeded in obtaining. Don Pepito Vinent listened to my narrative with great gravity, and in profound silence; but when I had related the steps taken to obtain information at St. Domingo, with their result, he said:

"I could have spared you all that trouble, if I had been here. Rest assured, señor, that Don Henrique Rodney did not take his friend with him to St. Domingo. He went on board the *Cristobal Colon* alone. I am a safe witness to the fact, for I was one of a party who saw him off. He was much liked, and we were all sorry for his going; but we expected him to return before long, and it was a cheerful leave-taking. None of us have heard anything of him since; but that, of course, is now accounted for by his illness, and his going away to the United States."

"What, then, can have become of Mr. Rosslyn? The mulatto servant at the house where they lived positively asserts that the two gentlemen left it at the same time."

"Are you quite sure that he says so?"

"Quite sure."

"Then you had better not believe much that Juan says, for that is positively untrue, and I can prove it. I called for Don Henrique Rodney at the house in the Calle de Santa Rosa at two o'clock in the afternoon, and the other Englishman had then been out for some hours in my boat, down the bay. He never returned to the house, and most assuredly he did not go on board the *Cristobal Colon*. I will now tell you," he continued, "as plainly and as quickly as I can, all I know of this matter. I saw a good deal of Mr. Rosslyn while he was here, and we were very good friends. He was a fine fellow, and he behaved very well in a little affair of an earthquake that we had in Santiago; it was not much for us; but a stranger might be excused for not liking it. A few days—no more than two, if I remember rightly—before Mr. Rodney went away, he asked me to lend him my boat, and I placed it, with the boatman, at his disposal. I afterwards found that it was not he, but his friend who used the boat, and on the day of Mr. Rodney's departure, Mr. Rosslyn went down the bay to a point which I shall be very happy to show you; had the boat pulled into a little creek, landed there, directed the boatman to wait for him until a certain hour, but not later, and was, to the best of my belief, never seen or heard of since, at Santiago."

"You can imagine the effect this statement produced on me; not only because it entirely upset my own theory of events, but because I considered it so alarming in itself.

"Was there no enquiry made by any

one here into so singular a disappearance?"

"None. Why should there have been any? Mr. Rodney had left the place, and I believe the only person who ever asked a question about his friend was myself. I went to the house where they had lived, when I had heard my boatman's account of his proceedings—that was not until some days later—and I was told that the English caballero was gone, and as he had sent away his luggage previously, it was plain that he had intended to go. Why he should have departed in so mysterious a way, and without bidding anyone good-bye, I could not guess; but you will excuse me for saying that I easily satisfied myself by imputing this to the odd ways of an Englishman. I imagined that he had gone to Havana, and indeed fancied I might perhaps see or hear of him while I was there, supposing he had not flitted from thence also."

"I told Don Pepito Vinent that we knew Mr. Rosslyn had not been at Havana, and I then asked his permission to see and question his boatman. Don Pepito laughed, as he answered:

"You should certainly do so, if I could catch José for you; but the fact is, I have not a notion where he is. He bought his freedom shortly after the time we are talking of. I dare say the Englishmen gave him something handsome, and he had been saving up his tips for a long time. It was a great nuisance, for he was a capital fellow, and I can tell you I did not let him go cheap. He was off on board a Spanish merchantman in no time, and Heaven knows what has become of him. It is, however, of no consequence that you cannot question him yourself, for I have told you all he knew."

"This was clearly the case. It had also occurred to me, while Don Pepito was speaking, that I had mistaken the sense of the mulatto servant's words, and that he had made no false statement. He had said only that Mr. Rosslyn had gone away on the same day as Mr. Rodney—a statement in accordance with that of Don Pepito's boatman—not that they had left the house together. There remained, then—after the evidence obtained from St. Domingo, and supported by Don Pepito's information, that Mr. Rosslyn had not gone to St. Domingo, and had not been seen at Havana—the fact that his luggage had been removed from the house of Don Gualterio de Turras; and on the possibility

of obtaining a clue from that circumstance my chance of success in ascertaining his destination now seemed to hang. Into this view of the case Don Pepito Vinent entered fully, and he also placed himself at my disposal for its investigation. We set off at once for the house in the Calle de Santa Rosa, and I found my new acquaintance a most entertaining companion.

"The result of a second examination of Juan, conducted this time by Don Pepito in Spanish, and translated to me, was the following:

"Mr. Rosslyn's luggage, consisting of a large portmanteau, was removed by Mr. Rodney's directions on the day before he left the house. The person who actually took it away was José, the boatman. Juan had seen this man, a Herculean fellow, it appears, shoulder the trunk and walk away with it, accompanied by Mr. Rodney; but he had not heard any directions given. Questioned concerning Mr. Rosslyn at that time, he said this took place at an early hour in the morning, and Mr. Rosslyn did not appear. The other articles of Mr. Rosslyn's property had all been taken away on the following day by José, the boatman, with whom Mr. Rosslyn left the house. Our next proceeding was to make the tour of the hotels, in order to ascertain whether Mr. Rodney had taken the portmanteau to one of them. Don Pepito Vinent had suggested that perhaps, as Mr. Rosslyn was a stranger to Don Gualterio de Turras, he might have thought it well to change his quarters on the departure of Mr. Rodney; 'although,' added Don Pepito, 'it seems unlikely that Mr. Rodney would not have mentioned the matter to me when he was going away. The fact is, however, that he never spoke of his friend at all, and I called at 'the camp'—that was the name we had for the house—in the full assurance that I should find him there.'

"The search proved vain. The boatman, the only person who could tell us what had been done with the portmanteau, was out of our reach.

"I dined with Don Pepito Vinent, and he showed me a good deal of Cuban life that same evening; telling me how he had also played showman to Mr. Hugh Rosslyn. I was naturally amused and interested, but I can truly assure you that I did not lose sight of my purpose for a moment, and I was all the time revolving it in my mind, and pondering how I could utilise the clue that might lie in Mr. Hugh Rosslyn's com-

munication to his sister about the young Creole lady. It was very late, and I had not been able to arrive at any decision, when fortune did me an unexpected good turn. We were in a private gambling-saloon, and I was watching the play—the game was one of which I knew nothing—without much interest, except in the countenances of the players, when I observed a man, in whom my ideal of a gamester was personified. He was young, not ill-looking, except for the extraordinary restlessness of his eyes, and evidently belonged to the Creole class. But his figure, and attitude, the intent eagerness, the absorption of his expression, the peculiar tension and wanness of his face, the stamp of slavery to an over-mastering passion which was set upon the man, the strange suggestion of claws in the form and movement of his hands, all combined to produce a typical image of the mean and detestable vice of gambling. The stakes on the game were very high, and the betting, in which Don Pepito Vinent joined, was brisk. The man I had been observing rose a winner, and as the table broke up, went out, with a nod to my companion, who returned it carelessly. I looked after him, and Don Pepito observed that I did so.

“That is a strange-looking man,” I said; ‘he was very much in earnest over the game.’

“He generally is very much in earnest over whatever he is doing, confound him!” said Don Pepito, whom the mere sight of the man seemed to exasperate into an unwise display of his sentiments to a stranger; ‘especially if it is harm. Let us go; we have had enough of this.’

“We walked out into the glorious night, and Don Pepito continued:

“There is an association in my mind between that fellow and Mr. Rodney and his friend. You remember my telling you that Mr. Rosslyn behaved very well in a shock of earthquake here? In fact, I believe there is no doubt he saved the life of a beautiful girl whom this man, Norberto de Rodas, her cousin, and her betrothed, had left to shift for herself, making sure of the safety of his own precious person.”

“Was Mr. Rosslyn acquainted with the young lady?” I asked eagerly.

“Surely, and he admired her very much. I remember well his interest and indignation when I told him how, in accordance with a family arrangement, Doña Ines de Rodas would either have to marry her cousin or go into a convent.”

“Ines! I had hold of the clue. I was on the brink of discovery at last!”

“No wonder he should be indignant,” said I, forgetting myself, I confess; ‘any Englishman would be shocked at such an act of tyranny as that.’

“Don Pepito laughed, rather ironically, and shrugged his shoulders like a Frenchman as he said: ‘Ah, you think so—so do I, perhaps; yet you English are not quite such perfect domestic lawmakers as you think yourselves. However, that is no matter. No indignation of any nationality could help fair Ines, as Don Henrique Rodney used to call her; she would not marry her cousin; she had to go into the convent, and thither her fortune went with her. I suspect Don Norberto felt that loss the more severely of the two; ever since he has been more insolent than ever, and luckier at play.’

“And how long is it since this poor girl went into the convent?”

“Let me see,” said Don Pepito, pausing and pondering. ‘It must have been about the time that Mr. Rodney went to St. Domingo, and Mr. Rosslyn went we do not know where. Nobody said much, or asked many questions about it. The subject was not a pleasant one, and Don Norberto de Rodas is a quarrelsome, disagreeable person; nobody cared about his discomfiture.’

“What convent has the young lady entered?”

“Las Anunciadas. If you like, I will show you the outside of it to-morrow.”

“With this we parted. It is now broad day, and I have passed the interval in writing these particulars for despatch by the mail. For Dr. Rosslyn I have merely summarised the facts. I take it that Mr. Hugh Rosslyn was convinced of the hopelessness of his suit to the young lady, and that immediately on being convinced that he must abandon it, he left Santiago—in an eccentric way, certainly—for a tour in the interior of the island. We have no trace of him after he left the boat, and, unless we can discover where his luggage was deposited, or sent to, we shall have to remain in ignorance of the direction which he took. To discover this, I must find means of communicating with Mr. Rodney, and this I shall at once proceed to do.”

(Added on the same day, a few minutes before the despatch of the mail):

“An accident, which I have no time to relate, brought me to-day in contact with

Don Norberto de Rodas, and I took advantage of it to ask him whether he could give me any information respecting Mr. Rodney. I had ascertained that Don Norberto de Rodas knew him very well, but Mr. Rosslyn hardly at all. His answer was most discouraging, though extremely civil. Indeed, I cannot say he at all justifies, on acquaintance, Don Pepito's strictures upon him. In one word, we have nothing more to hope, or, so far as I can see, to do, in Cuba. Mr. Rodney is dead. With this abrupt announcement, I must close my unsatisfactory communication.—Yours faithfully, WALTER RITCHIE."

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

KENT. PART IV.

FROM Farlight Down in Sussex, to the firm and level sands of Hythe in Kent, stretches the low coast-line of Romney Marsh, with its long projecting promontory, known as Dungeness: a promontory that ships might very well run against in the dark—they did so to a considerable extent in times gone by—but for the tall lighthouse that throws its cheerful ray across the narrow seas. The lighthouse itself has more of a history about it than lighthouses in general. The first lighthouse was built here in the reign of James the First by one Allen, a goldsmith and citizen of London, and its successor was also erected by private munificence, having been built in 1792 at the sole charge of the Earl of Leicester. Wyat was the architect, and successfully imitated the graceful form of Smeaton's Eddystone Lighthouse, which now, removed from its lonely rock, adorns the Hoe at Plymouth. Locally the lighthouse is known as Lydd Lighthouse, from the little town of that name close by—an ancient town, with its bailiff and jurats, which shares in the franchises of the Cinque Ports as a limb of the neighbouring Romney. A handsome church-tower is a sea-mark for ships in the Channel, and is said to have been built by Cardinal Wolsey, who owned the rectory once as Abbot of Tintern, to which the great tithes had been granted long before by one of the De Clares. A strange corner of the world is this, the shore furrowed by the sea into pits and water-holes, the shingle here running out into narrow tongues and projections, and there piled into high banks which a storm has brought, and which a fiercer storm may carry away again. Here

it was, on Denge Marsh, that the Abbot of Battle had the right of cutting the tongues from all the whales that were cast ashore. No longer are stranded whales a common object by the seashore, but other stray monsters of the deep are not unfrequently cast up by the tide.

There are memories of famous shipwrecks, too, some going far back into the mystic ages of tradition—as that of Saints Crispin and Crispianus, stranded in some Roman galley, whose graves were long pointed out, where, on that fatal shore, the stones of some dilapidated Roman causeway, known as Stone-end, formed a rude monument to the sainted pair. All about Denge Marsh has the briny flavour of the ocean, but when we reach New Romney, although the sea is still in evidence, lighting up the horizon, and giving its character to the sky, yet the general features of the landscape present a quiet and pastoral aspect. Rich grazing-land is intersected with innumerable channels and ditches, solid homesteads dot the surrounding levels, while the quiet and stolid little town seems more interested in cattle-shows and sheep-fairs than in any news from the sea, or in the argosies that pass by unheeded. And yet Romney is an ancient port, its "newness" mellowed by a thousand years or so of varied life, and is one of the earliest on the roll of the Cinque Ports, which like the Heptarchy, seldom corresponded exactly in number to their designation. "Dover, Sandwicus, Ry, Rum, Frigmare Ventus," as the old legist mustered them; the last being a feeble pun in law or dog Latin, Chill-sea-wind, for Winchelsea; must have Hastings and Hythe added to make the tale complete. But Rum or Romney was always of the number, even after her river had deserted its bed, and left her seaport stranded high and dry.

For the Rother, which now finds its way to the sea through the harbour of Rye, at one time, no doubt, flowed past Romney, and tall ships and galleys, with their gay pennons, clustered against its ancient quays. The ways of a river, in a marshy delta such as Romney, are vague and wilful to a degree, till artificial walls and embankments are raised to restrain its vagaries; and even then some great flood or violent storm may undo the patient work of centuries. And at some distant time the main channel of the marsh river must have found its exit to the sea still farther to the north-east, under the walls of the Roman station at Lympne, the

Portus Lemannis; where, in the later days of the Empire, there was a strong Roman garrison, and a walled camp, which has left some traces near the quiet little village, in ruins, which are popularly known as Studfall Castle. A curious testimony to this ancient importance of Lympne is to be found in the Shipway Cross—where formerly the men of the Cinque Ports met to hold their general courts—which stood on the hill overlooking the ancient port. At a later date the river found a shorter cut to the sea by Romney, which became the chief port of the district, while a considerable estuary carried the tide as far inland as Appledore—where an ancient ship was found some years ago—and even to Small Hythe, and Ebony, where a little chapel on the hill may have once shown a twinkling light to the seaman making for his haven.

From Romney Hoy to the North Foreland was the great smuggling frontier of Kent; and many an old-fashioned farmhouse about Romney could show a cunningly contrived cellar, where contraband goods might be stowed away in secret. Could, indeed, though whether they would or not is quite another matter; for it is whispered that, although smuggling on a large scale has ceased to be profitable, yet that "a drop of the right sort" may still be had by those who understand the ways of the Marsh.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Romney smugglers came, for a moment, into the way of general history. When Jacobites were plotting in France against the established dynasty, the surest and most secret way of communicating with friends in England was through the smugglers of the Marsh. Thus, when the conspirators of St. Germain's had hatched a plot for the destruction of King William, it was through the Marsh that the blow was intended to be struck. Sir George Barclay, who was commissioned to organise the scheme, landed secretly on a desolate spot on the shore of the Marsh, a landing-place known to smugglers only; one of the chief of whom, named Hunt, dwelt in a house close by, with only a few lookers—the shepherds of the Marsh—as his neighbours. Here the smugglers had established a dépôt of silks, and laces, and other contraband goods, which found their way through the Weald of Kent to London. But since the Revolution, says Lord Macaulay, Hunt had discovered "that of all cargoes a cargo of traitors paid best". A clandestine post was established with

London, through the Marsh and the weald, and in this way twenty picked men, ready for any desperate deed, were smuggled to London. The plan was to attack the King on his return from hunting in Richmond Forest. It was his habit to hunt there every Saturday, crossing the river at Chiswick Ferry; and here, in a narrow, swampy lane, leading up from the river, the little band of assassins were to set upon him. French troops were collected at Calais, ready to sail for the Kentish coast, to take advantage of the confusion caused by the King's death. But the plot was discovered, and three of the conspirators were caught and executed. Sir George, however, made good his escape, thanks to his friends in the Marsh.

A tragic incident of the smuggling times was witnessed at Romney itself, when one day a smuggler named Walker had been secured by the revenue-officers and brought before the magistrates at the court-house.

The Cinque Port court-house is described by Ingoldsby as being "of a composite order of architecture, a fanciful arrangement of bricks and timber, with what Dr. Johnson would have styled interstices reticulated and decussated between intersections of lath and plaster. The less euphonious designation in the weald is a 'noggin.' One half the basement-storey is usually of the more solid material; the other open to the street, from which it is separated only by a row of dingy columns, supporting a portion of the superstructure. The basement is paved with tiles, and sometimes does duty as a market-place," while, on off days, it serves as a repository for hurdles and sheep-pens, "and in its centre, flanking the boarded staircase that leads to the sessions-house above, stands an ominous-looking machine of heavy, perforated wood—the town-stocks, in fact."

About the Romney court-house a crowd had gathered as the examination of the smuggler proceeded, and, fearing a rescue, the Customs' officials had called in the aid of a lieutenant of the navy and a party of man-o'-war's men, who were stationed in the town. A cart was brought to the court-house door, and the smuggler, on his committal by the magistrate, was brought down and placed within it, guarded by the cutlasses of the sailors. But then the crowd, composed chiefly of sturdy seafaring-men and smugglers, with a sprinkling of shrill fishwives, made a rush for the cart, which they carried by assault,

when they dragged out the manacled smuggler, and would have carried him away into a place of safety. Upon this the magistrate, thinking more of his slighted authority than of the sacredness of human life, called out to the officer: "Run the rascal through the body." And the lieutenant, hustled by the crowd, and irritated by blows and abuse, took the magistrate at his word, and killed poor Walker with a sword-thrust.

Great was the indignation, and loud the threats of revenge, among the seafaring population of the coast. But the Government supported their officer, who received promotion, and was long stationed in the district as a thorn in the side of the smuggling community.

But the naval service in general was not unfriendly to the smugglers, and although, during the French war, the Channel swarmed with English cruisers, there was no great difficulty in running a cargo. If a smuggling vessel was overhauled and stopped by a man-of-war, and her crew would give information as to the state of the French harbours, and what was going on along the enemy's coast, the craft would be released, and a certificate given to her commander, which would serve his turn if he fell in with another King's ship. It was not till 1817, soon after the close of the great war, that the coast blockade, as it was called, was instituted, and the coast-guard placed under naval officers, and recruited from the ranks of old man-o'-war's men. Then the risks and dangers of a smuggler's life were greatly increased, and, although the trade was still carried on briskly, the frequent captures and losses made it no longer possible to accumulate one of those modest fortunes which had once been the finish of the prudent smuggler's career. It was now too risky to convey contraband goods by horses and carts across the country, and the law prohibited British vessels from carrying spirits in casks of less than sixty gallons, or tobacco and snuff in bales of less than four hundred and fifty pounds—packages beyond the strength of any man to carry. Thus the smugglers' portable kegs and parcels were hall-marked, as it were, and liable to seizure anywhere. Tea was prohibited altogether, being a monopoly of the East India Company. But tea was now one of the most profitable articles to smuggle, and could be got rid of with the greatest facility, so not a little tea was landed free of duty by the agency of

the captains of the great East Indiamen—those noble ships which resembled line-of-battle ships in size and equipment. Smugglers' boats would be on the look-out for the fleet of Indiamen in the Downs, and the East India captain's little venture in teas and silks would be quietly transhipped, to the great profit of all the parties concerned.

To this period belongs the dolorous story of the four or five smugglers who, pursued by the revenue-officers, essayed to cross the military canal by Pett Horse Race, and missing the spot where it was fordable, were either drowned swimming across, or fell under the bullets of their pursuers. This, it may be said, is the solitary service that the military canal has rendered to the Government; and yet it is a fine work in its way, a rival to the Pict's Wall or Offa's Dyke, twenty-three miles long, cut right through the marsh from Hythe to Rye, ninety feet wide, and eighteen feet deep, with grassy parapets and revetments, and batteries to sweep the reaches of its course. The canal is linked in with the martello-towers along the coast, each tower with its long Tom mounted on a swivel to slaughter the enemy all round. And no doubt, if we had enticed an invading enemy into Romney Marsh, he might have had some difficulty in getting out again.

The Marsh itself, it may be noted, has its own corporate jurisdiction, with its court at Dymchurch, a village upon the great seawall, which, from time immemorial, has protected the rich grasslands from the sea. As thick as Dymchurch Wall, is a saying locally current, and the wall is about three miles long, of an average height of about twenty feet, and is from fifteen to thirty feet wide. As quantities of Roman pottery have been found about this embankment, as well as relics of mediæval and Saxon times, it is evident that the reclamation and protection of the Marsh were not affairs of yesterday.

There are curious customs, too, connected with the jurisdiction of the Cinque Ports, some of which seem to come down from high antiquity. In Romney, Sandwich, and Dover the commonalty were summoned to assemble by the blowing of a horn, and some of these horns are preserved among the corporate treasures, along with the curious seals and maces belonging to their once paramount authority. The mayor, or bailiff, and his jurats had jurisdiction over all, even capital, offences. In Romney, when a man was found guilty of felony,

and was condemned to be hanged, the bailiff found the gallows, and the rope, and the suter, or binding-straps, and he who made the appeal—the prosecutor, that is—must find the hangman. But he could not always find a hangman, and it is a curious distinction between ancient English towns and those on the Continent, that while in the latter there was generally a public executioner, who took rank above the bourgeois, and next to the echevins of the town, there is no trace of such a functionary in England; while even the royal headsman, the doomster of the Tower, does not seem to have held any recognised position. Failing a hangman, the prosecutor must do the office himself. But he might keep the culprit in gaol till he found a hangman, or chose to execute the office himself.

In Sandwich the difficulty of finding an executioner was got over by casting out the culprit upon the sands at a place called Thieves Down, where the whole community set to work and buried the poor wretch alive.

Again, when the community elected a mayor or bailiff, and the man refused to take the office, according to the custom of the ports, they might pull his house down over his head. As might be expected, few instances occur where the proposed dignity was refused. Indeed, an ambitious man might well be content with the powers of a bailiff of the Cinque Ports, whose dignity was respected wherever the well-known flag of the ports was hoisted. He sent his deputies to Yarmouth to rule over the sands in the fishing-season, and he issued his writs like any independent potentate; while, if a Port'sman had a debtor in another town, who neglected to pay him, he went to his own mayor or bailiff, and obtained a writ of withernam, which empowered him to seize any goods belonging to the fellow-citizens of his debtor, wherever he could lay hands on them. This privilege, however, was not admitted by the King's justices; and the City of London having resented its application to the goods of its citizens, the Cinque Ports were cast in the law-courts, and had to bate their pretensions.

Then there were foreign expeditions, when the Cinque Ports ravaged the coasts of Normandy, or even beat up the Spaniards in their holds. But if at times they got booty and plunder, they were themselves liable to be pillaged in the same way. Sandwich was burnt and plundered

over and over again; and most of the ports, at one time or another, experienced a like calamity.

When we come to Hythe, we have crossed the frontier of the Marsh, and are approaching that pleasant region where health and wealth are combined, according to the old writers—where a quiet and secluded, but diversified and well-wooded, country is bordered by white cliffs and a bright, sparkling sea. Here is the stronghold of the old-fashioned Kentish gentry, whose muster-roll Ingoldsby thus pleasantly calls over:

Such as Honeywood, Oxenden, Knatchbull, and Norton,
Matthew Robinson, too, with his beard, from Monks Horton,
The Frogs and Finch Hattons, Tokes, Deerings, and Deedses,
And Fairfax, who then call'd the Castle of Leeds his.

There is not much in Hythe to recall the memory of its former importance as one of the Cinque Ports. If it ever had a harbour, that harbour is now a heap of shingle; but the sands are fine, the sea is good, and, with visitors in summer, and the School of Musketry all the year round, Hythe has certainly no longer any claim to be considered the duller town in England. Then there is Saltwood Castle close by, with really fine ruins of the baronial residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. On the site was an early fortress of the Kings of Kent, and the see of Canterbury held it with the other Saxon royalties of Kent long before the Conquest. But the hold of the Archbishop over the castle was rather nominal than real, and Norman knights built upon and fortified the site. In Becket's time it was in the hands of one of the prelate's bitterest enemies; and the four knights, who came from France to murder the Archbishop, were received within its walls on the night before the foul deed, and there planned the way of its accomplishment. The grim old Norman fortress was transformed by Archbishop Courtenay in the reign of Richard the Second, the outward features of strength being retained, with handsome chambers, halls, and galleries within; and here the Archbishop kept a princely court till the days of the Reformation. It had an ill-repute with heretics, however, this Saltwood Castle, with its Lollards' Tower and gloomy dungeons. Foxe's Book of Martyrs records how William Thorp of Shrewsbury, "a man distinguished for learning and ability, was arraigned before

Archbishop Arundel, at Saltwood; and within the dungeon depths of that stronghold were hidden all traces of his end."

Close by is Monks Horton—"Monks," from a small priory whose ruins are still to be discovered—distinguished by Ingoldsby as the residence of Matthew Robinson with the beard. This was really a worthy but eccentric man, who in his old age inherited the title of Lord Rokeby, the Robinsons having, it will be remembered, acquired the ancient patrimony of Sir Walter Scott's hero, although a long way removed from our ideal of border chieftains. He always dressed like a peasant, and tramped about to fair and market, like any drover, buying and selling the black cattle with which he stocked his park. Sometimes, indeed, he would drive out in the family-coach, but then he put his servants inside, and occupied the box himself—nothing out of the way in these four-in-hand days, but thought much of in East Kent, which then, as now, had a character of primness and precision. His favourite aversion was the Bank of England, of which institution he always prophesied evil, and it is said he laid a wager of fifty pounds, the moneys staked with a friend in Maidstone, that the Bank would break within so many years. You might think that he lost his wager. Not a bit of it. When the Bank suspended specie payments, in 1797, Matthew of Horton had his horses put to and drove over in triumph to claim the stakes.

There was another Robinson at Denton—to wit, Billy Robinson, as he was familiarly called, the friend of Thomas Gray, the poet, once curate of Kensington, but who married an heiress and settled down in Kent. Here the poet visited his friend, and has recorded his impressions of Kent, the beauties of which seem to have taken him by surprise. Some have suggested that the famous elegy was suggested by a visit to Thanington Church, close to Canterbury, but this suggestion, although a high compliment to the locality, which, however, may have changed a good deal since, is hardly admissible, as the elegy was written some fifteen years before Gray's visit to Kent.

If the poet had visited the coast he would have found a fishy little village at Folkestone, with one narrow street paved with cobbles, and the houses, mere fishermen's huts, all festooned with dried dabs. And such the town continued till well on in the present century. Its mayor and jurats were the subjects of a good deal of

pleasantry in neighbouring parts. Like the men of Gotham, they were the heroes of all kinds of curious tales. They hedged in a cuckoo; a peacock was regarded with dismay as a kind of fiery serpent; and the story was often told of Queen Elizabeth's visit to Folkestone. The mayor, who was elevated above the heads of his neighbours on a three-legged stool, received her majesty with the following verse:

Most gracious queene,
Welcome to Folkesteene.

Upon which the Queen, with more readiness than royal courtesy, replied:

Most gracious fool,
Get off that stool.

And then the harbour! Fifty years ago, Folkestone Harbour was a mere bank of shingles, with a trickle of water flowing through. And then the South Eastern Railway came, and everything was transformed, while Dover, which had sat in the seat of the scorn, seemed destined to be left in the cold.

But Dover, which has had many ups and downs, has recovered much of its prestige as the chief Channel port, and we can nowhere match its noble cliffs and massive castle frowning from the heights. There is no getting back, either, to the foundation of Dover as a town. Britons, Romans, Saxons, occupied it in their turn, and all the time it seems to have been a flourishing port and to have contained a populous community. In Domesday we find the town, with its guildhall and municipal privileges, which the Conqueror did not disturb. But the Norman builders enlarged and strengthened the castle, built churches and monasteries in every quarter, and rendered it the lock and key of the kingdom. The wars with France, and the constant passage of royal and distinguished personages with troops, arms, munitions, and all the pomp and circumstance of war or peaceful ceremony, only increased the importance of Dover. The town came to its lowest ebb, perhaps, in the reign of Elizabeth, when, "what by decay of the haven and what by the overthrow of the religious houses and loss of Calais, it was brought in a manner to miserable nakedness and decay." This was the state in which Shakespeare must have seen it, when he brought away the memory of its stupendous cliffs, and caught sight of the samphire-gatherer half-way down.

Of samphire, by the way, Hasted tells us circumstantially: "It is gathered mid-way down the cliffs from a great height

above, those who follow this dreadful trade being let down from the top by ropes in a basket for the purpose. This samphire being a very fine-flavoured sort, great quantity of it is pickled, and afterwards barreled, and sent up to London and other places as a great luxury for the tables of the opulent." And another traveller in Kent, towards the end of the seventeenth century, notices "that excellent sallad which they call samphire." Are there any old wives about Dover now, one wonders, who pickle samphire?

From Dover we soon reach the South Foreland, with its bright electric lights that shine far over the Channel at night—a welcome greeting to the traveller on the seas—with St. Margaret's Bay beyond, and the fine old Norman church of St. Margaret's, surrounded by an amphitheatre of cliffs. Beyond is the first of a line of block-houses, built by Henry the Eighth—Walmer Castle, now modified into the official and very pleasant residence of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. Here the Duke of Wellington died in 1852. Then we have Deal and Sandown castles, of the same Henry the Eighth build, the former the prison of Colonel Hutcheson, the husband of the writer of the *Memoirs*—a cold and rheumatic abode, which was not conducive to longevity. The coast now shelves into low and sandy flats, among which lies Sandwich, quite a dead city in the way of commercial life, and with not much, except its fine churches, to show for its former greatness. And then we come to well-known Thanet, with its seaside resorts—"the Isle Thanatos, luckie for cornefieldes and fatte soyle, and not only healthful to itself, but also to other places. For inasmuch as there is no snake creeping there, the earth thereof killeth snakes." And Lambarde gives us the authority for this curious bit of natural history—"Julius Solinus, in his description of England, saith thus of Thanet: 'There be no snakes in Tanet, saith he; and the earth that is brought from thence will kill them.'" Modern critics may decline to admit this as a fact without further evidence.

And now we may follow the familiar coast-line of the Thames-mouth, passing first

A village called Birchington, famed for its rolls,
As the fishing-bank just in its front is for soles.

And the more noted Reculver, with its twin towers—

Both tall and upright, and just equal in height—
The Trinity House talked of painting them white.

Happily the old towers of Reculver Church have been spared this profanation, marking, as they do, the site of the old Roman station of Regalbium, of which some traces may yet be found, and which has furnished many Roman relics. And Herne Bay and Whitstable bring us on the way towards Faversham Creek and the intricate channels of the Swale. And then we reach Gillingham, not far from the dockyards of Chatham.

When Lambarde visited the place in 1596, he described, as a visitor might now, "the station or Harborow of the Navie Royall" at Gillingham and Chatham, and gave a list of the ships of war lying there. Some of these names have disappeared from the navy-list, but many are still in use, having descended from ship to ship as battle, or shipwreck, or the gnawing tooth of time made gaps in the roll of fame. Thus there are "the Victory, the Warspyte, the Vanteguard, the Raine-bowe, the Defiance, the Dreadnought, the Swiftsure," while of the names that have dropped out many were of personal application—as Elizabeth Jonas, Mary Rose, and Ark Rauleigh.

The conjunction of the three towns on the Medway reminds us of the schoolboy catch: "Rochester, Chatham, and Strood, all begins with an A—" Rochester, with its cramped cathedral and noble castle-keep, and Strood, which does not leave any distinct impression on the traveller's memory or note-book. Hard-by is Gads-hill with its double literary association; firstly, in Shakespeare's noble fancy, Sir John Falstaff, secondly as having been the residence of Charles Dickens.

The little-known promontory of Hoo is now more accessible than of old, although one rarely hears of anybody going that way. Like Sheppey, it is more or less associated with fogs and rheumatics—perhaps unjustly—and a few dull and drizzly days in such a neighbourhood will leave an impression that is not easily obliterated. But there is Cowling or Cooling Castle in the midst of the peninsula, which is not without interest, connected as it is with Oldcastle, the celebrated Lollard; with Jack Cade, who fled thither from London; and with the abortive insurrection of Sir Thomas Wyatt, who failed to take it by a coup de main.

And now we come to Gravesend, the end of the jurisdiction of the Portreeve—in fact, also in name—of London. Or it may be the Greaves ham or the Greaves

sand. However that may be, there is no place better seated on the river-bank, or that leaves a more pleasant impression on the passer-by. Northfleet, which is the next parish on the river-bank, has its interest in the curiously quarried chalk-rock, among which lies Rosherville, the last survivor of the great pleasure-gardens resorted to by Londoners. The country people say that starting from this point you may cross the county of Kent in four parishes—namely, Northfleet, Meopham, Wrotham, and Tunbridge. And anyone who attempted the feat would be well rewarded for his pains by a sight of some of the pleasantest of rural scenes.

MY LETTER.

I READ it, my letter, my letter, as I sate in my rocky nest;
The waves at my feet were creaming, the wind blew soft from the west;
The sunshine on the tangle-beds was blazing fiercely down,
And as they wavered to and fro, they glowed to golden brown.
I heard the cry of the curlews blend with the breakers' roar,
I took from my breast my letter, and read it yet once more.
I read it, my letter, my letter, as I loitered by the sea,
And, as I read, my fancy was flying fast and free,
Away from the sunny seaboard, away from the purple down;
I saw the smoky, sullen streets, I saw the busy town;
I saw the desk with its dusty load, I saw the dreary room,
And I saw the dark-blue eyes I knew, outshining in the gloom.
I read it, my letter, my letter, and I saw illumine it,
The graceful phrase, the graphic touch, the flash of ready wit,
The tender lingering o'er the words, that even as he wrote,
Seemed as Love hovered over them, their truth and depth to note;
The sweet old words whose iterance, to those that yearn to hear
But deepens ever down and down, and deepening grows more dear.
I read it, my letter, my letter; then softly in fragments small,
I tore the precious pages, and stopped to kiss them all;
They were safe and sure, the golden words, re-written in my heart,
It were surely best, in a world of change, with their earthly shrine to part;
So I tore it, my letter, my letter, with a smile, and with a sigh,
And tossed them to the sunny sea, beneath the sunny sky.
To what I have loved so long and well, the flashing, dancing wave,
To the mighty arms of the great North Sea, the thing I prized I gave;
It should die, my letter, my letter, no common mortal death,
It should be rocked upon the ocean's breast, lulled by the ocean's breath.
Has a monarch kinglier requiem, a chief a nobler shrine,
Than that I gave my letter, from that rocky rest of mine?

THE CAMBRIDGE GREEK PLAY.

CAMBRIDGE is no novice in play-acting. I do not mean the surreptitious acting in which Mr. Burnand used to take so prominent a share, but acting which was countenanced by the authorities, and almost formed a part of the University programme. No doubt, there, as elsewhere, the friars had their sacred dramas, but they never equalled the fame of the Coventry or Norwich plays, or of those which continued to delight the Cornish folk after the rest of England had got too enlightened for such travesties of Scripture. A worse kind of travesty, however, was much acted at Cambridge, and listened to with great gusto. Kirchmeyer wrote "Pammachius," and other plays, for the purpose of throwing ridicule on the old faith, and these were translated by Bale—who seasoned them with coarse jests, of which the author would have been ashamed—and acted at several colleges in the interests of the Reformation. It is enough to make one a cynic, if not a pessimist, to see how much evil has to be done in order to ensure the carrying through of any good measure. You cannot stir up the masses by an appeal to their reason. The masses have very little reason to appeal to; and so "bitter bilious Bale"—he had begun as a monk, and naturally cried down those whom he had deserted—appealed to anything rather than to men's reason; and, to her shame, Cambridge, which had rabidly espoused the new views, acted his plays *con amore*, partly for the sake of worrying Bishop Gardiner, the "visitor" of the University, who knew the plays were libellous, and yet could not get from Matthew Parker (afterwards Elizabeth's Archbishop), or from anyone in authority, a definite condemnation of them. So Bale, being, moreover, patronised by Thomas Cromwell, had it all his own way with his "Comedy of Johan Baptiste's Prechynge"; his "Tragedy of God's Chief Promises to Man"; his "Mysterye of Inyquyte"; or, the "Heretycall Genealogye of Pontius Pantolabus"; and when Reform triumphed under Edward the Sixth, he was made Bishop of Ossory, and did his best—like too many other Anglo-Irish Bishops, then and afterwards—to make the religion of England for ever unacceptable to his flock.

But Bale's plays had nothing in common with our Cambridge play of this winter.

To find any sort of parallel to it we must go back a few years—to 1536, the date of Anne Boleyn's death, when the Plutus of Aristophanes was acted by the Johnians "with the new Greek pronunciation"; or we must go forward more than half a century, and fancy ourselves with James the First—"the royal pedant" he has been most undeservedly called, because he kept up his classics, and really enjoyed a Latin speech—when he sat out Ignoramus, that monstrous comedy stuffed full of logic and dull jokes, which actually lasted five and a half hours. And James had no music to help him through; whereas of this year's play, *The Eumenides*, Dr. Stanford's music was one of the most important parts. Take away that, and Mr. O'Connor's excellent scenery, and not even the novelty of having a young lady from Girton to act the chief part could have made it a success. The music of *The Birds*, that brilliant extravaganza which I described just two years ago, was as admirably appropriate as it was indispensable; but a rattling farce could perhaps get on better without music than such a play as that lately acted.

For what is *The Eumenides*? It is the last part of *Æschylus's* masterpiece, the *Oresteian* trilogy. Those insatiable playgoers, the Athenians, sat all day at the theatre, during the great festival of Dionysus—perhaps it was as well they should, for they were kept so long at least out of the wine-shop—and to accommodate their theatrical appetite, which was almost as voracious as that of Chinese or Japs nowadays, the tragedies were served up in sets of three (trilogies), each set relieved by a satyric—not satiric—buffo-farce.

Of the *Orestes* trilogy, the first part—*The Agamemnon*—describes the return of the hero-king from Troy, and his murder by his faithless wife Clytemnestra and her paramour *Ægisthus*. The second part, *The Choephorai*—pitcher-bearers—so called from a procession of maidens bearing offerings to Agamemnon's tomb, is unrepresentably classical—rather one act in a drama than a play, its chief incident being the coming in of Orestes, Agamemnon's son, and his friend, Pylades, in disguise, to spy out the land. Orestes was away when his father was killed; he has heard the sad tale, and has heard also that his mother is seeking his own life, and Apollo, whose oracle he consulted, has ordered him to avenge his father. So he and his friend lull Clytem-

nestra into security by telling a cock-and-bull story of a chariot-race, in which her son was thrown out and killed. At last he makes himself known and kills her; and immediately, unseen by all save him, the Furies come upon him, and he flies in terror, making his way naturally to the altar of the god at whose bidding he acted.

And now begins *The Eumenides*—for this, which means "well-disposed", was the Athenian name for the Furies, given them either as the mischievous fairies are in a deprecatory way called the "good people", or because, as we shall see by-and-by, they did change their character as far as Athens was concerned. The opening scene shows the terrace in front of Apollo's temple at Delphi; behind is a beautiful glen, leading up to the famed twin-peaks of Parnassus. Enter the Prophetess (M. A. North, of Christ's College) to make the daily offering on the altar which stands in the central front of the stage. The Greeks called this space, just behind the footlights, orchestra (dancing-ground) because the classic dances—now from right to left (*strophè*), now the reverse way (*anti-strophè*)—went round this altar; the whole theatrical performance being, as everybody ought to know, a religious ceremony, to which Hindooism nowadays offers many parallels. After a solemn invocation to all gods and goddesses that are, she goes into the temple to get her sacred things, but straightway rushes wildly out, the music, too, changing from *lento maestoso* to a wild *crescendo*, and falls prostrate at the altar, soon recovering herself enough to explain that she has seen a vision of gruesome creatures—women she will not call them, nor gorgons, nor harpies (of whom she has seen pictures), for these are wingless. And there they are asleep in the temple, and in their midst, grasping the hallowed stone, which is the earth's centre, sits a man in the sad-coloured garb of a suppliant, holding a branch of olive, and in his other hand a sword dripping with blood. But she is only Phœbus's minister, and must leave these things to him whose business it is to keep his shrine free from pollution. The man is Orestes (A. R. Macklin, Caius College); the strange beings are the Furies, who, having tracked him to Apollo's temple, have fallen asleep just as he was within their grasp; and when the curtain rises we see him, weary and with a look of agony on his face, in the orthodox posture

of a suppliant beside the cylindrical stone, which is represented as just like the lingam of an Indian temple. What the Furies are like one cannot yet tell; they are a confused mass of dark garments, bare legs and arms, and shaggy grey hair, heaped round the temple-interior; and that interior, with its low Doric pillars, the sparing use of colour in the frieze, the shield with a serpent blazoned on it hanging over the cave's mouth which occupies one side of the wall, and from which rises every now and then a vapour—the sacred steam, by breathing which the Pythoness became inspired—was as effective as any part of the scenery. Enter Apollo (D. N. Pollock, King's College), glorious in golden cloak and bright red tunic, who, in answer to Orestes's mute appeal, assures him of protection, and urges him to seize the time while his pursuers are asleep for making his way to Athens, there to be tried before impartial judges. To Hermes, his brother, who is present, but says nothing (the old Greek drama rarely allowed more than two speakers at a time), and who is by office god of guidance as well as of eloquence, he gives the charge of leading Orestes on his way; and so the three leave the temple, the Furies moaning and tossing restlessly, but sleeping through it all. But they are not to sleep long, for soon a ghastly shape appears, at first shadowy, then gradually condensing into the ghost of Clytemnestra (C. Platts, Trinity College). She looks on the sleepers with inexpressible despair; and the changes of tone and manner in her speech are as good as anything in the play. Now she is upbraiding them, now showing her wounds, now wailing that there is no god to take her part. Anon, she waxes wild in her taunts, and there begins among the Furies a stirring of arms and legs, and writhings of bodies, and noises such as dogs make in their sleep. At last they all start up, and, after running hither and thither like hounds at fault, gather round the altar and break into a wild choric song. The snakes round their arms, the red gauze veils which give weirdness to their heads, the ashy pallor of their faces, complete a very good get-up; better, one thinks, without the hideous masks which they doubtless wore in the original representation. An undergraduate, who sat close by me, and who evidently had been behind the scenes, told some ladies whom he was lionising, that the dresses this time cost much less than the costumes worn in *The Birds*. "You see

how simple these are—most of them made in Cambridge; while the others we had to get from London. Those Furies' dresses cost seven shillings apiece, and were most of them made by Mr. Clark's nurse"—Mr. J. W. Clark, of Trinity, has been the soul of the managing-committee—"yet we netted two hundred pounds from *The Birds*." "And what did you do with it?" "Spent it in getting up this. That's how our surplus will always go." During the song the ghost vanishes, and by-and-by Apollo comes in, and breaking into two detachments, the Furies fling out their arms at him in furious menace. Hereupon Apollo bids them at once quit the shrine which their accursed presence is polluting, and when they linger and begin to argue, he fits an arrow to his silver bow, and drives them cowering round and round the stage, and then off it. All this is—for us, though it was not for the old Greeks—perilously near burlesque, but the good acting of (S. M. Leathes, of Trinity) the chief Fury—in a Greek chorus there is always a spokesman choragus—carries it through, helped by the grand music and the perfect training of the singers. Apollo, too, looks his part—a right comely god, and full of Greek god-like scorn of the foul creatures whom he is driving out. The next act gives us the terrace outside Pallas Athene's temple on the Acropolis—not the grand Parthenon, but some older, humbler building. Inside it is dimly seen the statue of the goddess, spear in hand. Orestes comes in, led by Hermes; and kneeling on the temple-steps says a few words in prayer. Then he enters the temple, and just as he has flung himself at the feet of the goddess, his pursuers come on the stage. For the moment they do not see him, but working by scent, they follow his track, the music changing from slow to quick movements, and vice-versâ. The beautiful peep of the calm sea through the temple portico contrasts with their restless movements. Then Orestes sallies forth, still keeping within the shadow of the portico, within which the Furies dare not set foot, and, explaining that he has been assoyled at the shrine of Phœbus, and feels the taint of sin passing away, calls on Athene for help, curiously bringing in, Greek fashion, a political allusion of the day by assuring her that, if she helps him now, she will win his people of Argos—with whom the Athenians were, when the play was first acted, planning an alliance—as her allies

for ever. The Furies, through their choragus, threaten him so savagely that he is fain again to take refuge at the feet of the statue. Despite the gods, they tell him, he is doomed to be theirs; he will wander and pass away unregarded; no sense of joy within his soul; a shade and not a man; the prey of fiends. And then they burst into a song, one strophè of which Mr. Verrall—whose translation is given in the libretto—renders:

Sing then the spell, Sisters of Hell;
Chant him the charm, mighty to harm,
Binding the blood, madding the mood.
So shall he pine until the grave receive him,
To find no grace even in the grave.

And so on through song after song, each rendered with wilder and wilder effect, those weird sisters, like Macbeth's witches multiplied fivefold, dance intricate dances with tossing of arms and pointing of fingers, while the moon, rising over the sea, looks down on the grim scene.

Suddenly, with the dawn, comes Athene (Miss J. E. Case, of Girton) in flashing helmet with huge plume, and glittering ægis (originally "goat-skin", then a scale-armour tippet over her left arm), and long white dress, just as one sees her in the statues. "Who are ye, and who is he, and why am I called hither?" she asks; for she had been away in the Troad, and Greek gods, though they could hear afar off, were not held to be omnipresent. The Furies answer her, their eager replies and their wild rushes forward contrasting with her perfect calm. Then Orestes comes forth and tells his tale; and, at each point of his confession, his pursuers, folding their arms tightly across their chests, burst out into a low yell. Athene says that, as the cause has come to her, she will bring the chosen best of her burgesses to be sworn judges, thus founding the famous court of Mars' hill—Areiopagos—of which Æschylus, a good old Tory, was anxious to enhance the credit by showing that it was of divine institution, and had in the old days judged between gods. There was a reason for this. Athens was going too fast down the hill of democracy; her old institutions were getting discredited. The political power of the Areiopagos had become almost nil; and even its jurisdiction in homicide, to extol which is the main object of the play, was threatened. Exit Athene, leading off Orestes, at whom the Furies make a snatch, and then begin dancing and singing a wild recitative, of which the tune changes with every turn of the dance. These choral songs are the

great feature of the play; and it was strange, and says much for the growth of musical education, to see almost every third person, male and female alike, in the low, ill-constructed theatre, following the printed notes of Dr. Stanford's music. Meanwhile, inside the temple, the goddess stood radiant, as she did when Pheidias carved her in ivory and gold, and at her very feet—no longer at those of her statue—lay Orestes, a gleam of hope in his anxious face. The illusion was perfect, save that Athene had black hair instead of the auburn which traditionally belonged to her whom Pope's translation calls "the blue-eyed maid".

In the last act the scenery is very beautiful. The Bay of Athens, the rosy cliffs crowned with ramparts, the Acropolis in the background, and in front the stone benches for the judges in the court; a big flat stone up above them in their midst being the seat of the goddess. Then the gold-greaved, gold-helmeted herald brings in the judges—venerable men (were they dons or professionals? they are not named in the play bills), who totter to their places, and are followed by a group of citizens in white. Then the trumpet sounds, and is echoed by the far-off rocks, while Apollo comes in—for he, too, though a god, is one of the defendants—and Orestes, and Athene, on whom falls a glorious light as she seats herself on the throne of judgment. The Furies squat round the front of the stage like Red Indians, their choragus standing forward to act as accuser. The case is set forth, and when Orestes confesses that he did slay his mother, the whole chorus leaps to its feet, and points at him, while their fogleman hisses out: "So! one already of the three falls" (three were required to give victory in a wrestling-match). Then Apollo, to whom Orestes appeals, pleads his Father's behest: "I never yet gave oracle without command of Zeus, and it was meet that He should avenge the hero struck down by shameful subtlety in the hour of his triumph." Apollo does not always keep up a god-like serenity. Once he scolds the Furies; but it is hard for a god to be as it were in the dock; and, as there are no counsel on either side, the two parties clash together without any buffer between them. When the case has been fully heard, Athene rises, and charges her fifteen judges to give righteous judgment. Two of them go out, and quickly return with a

plate of beans (black and white) and a balloting urn—a tall terra-cotta jar. These they place on the altar, and each deliberately drops in his vote, the chorus crying out against the younger race of gods, who are doing despite to hoary eld. Last of all, Athene gives her vote for Orestes, explaining that she was not of woman born, and that, save that she will not wed, she is heart and voice for man rather than for woman. To us there is a touch of comedy in this declaration, the only touch which mars an otherwise perfectly godlike character; but to a Greek, who had been bred up to all this as his religion, it was not so. For him Pallas Athene, the fierce virgin goddess, in fight more than a match for Ares himself, sprung from the brain of Zeus, was the embodied thought of the Father, and, therefore, she might well say: "I am of the father altogether." But all comic ideas disappear when the chorus, hearing how Athene's vote has gone, gives a gasp of disappointment. Then the two oldest judges slowly rise, and emptying the urn, count the votes. They are equal, which, according to the rule enunciated at the outset, means that the prisoner is acquitted. The Furies, with tightly-folded arms and doubled fists, utter a shuddering yell, and Orestes, falling at the goddess's feet, gives thanks, and, on behalf of his country, makes promises for the future. He then, with Apollo, walks away behind the disappearing line of judges. And now follows a long choric scene, during which nothing but excellent intelligent acting keeps the play from dragging. The Furies—who throughout the trial were with one voice hissing out their scorn of Apollo, this new sooth-saying god who prompts to murder, and darting their threatening arms at Orestes—now run wildly round the altar, and break into two companies, circling right and left, and threatening vengeance on the young city which has witnessed their discomfiture. To calm them is Athene's task, and a hard task it is. Thrice she comes down into their midst, not beseeching—that would be unworthy of her high godhead—but pointing out that "there is no slight"; and that, if they will, they may enter in and share with her the possession of the land. It seems a strange proposal, and at first only adds fuel to their wrath. In a wild, ringing burst, with Wagnerian music, they cry: "Shall it be borne (say, oh, say!) the bitter scorn here with our shame to dwell?" And, in spite of

repeated appeals, they protest in shrill recitative, with hands spread cross-fashion, that reconciliation is impossible. But at last Athene's wise tongue prevails; and when she says: "From these stern faces Athens, I see, shall win much good," there is a change in their looks as well as in their manner. Beginning with curses, they have turned round to the exact opposite. "Blessed, yea, blessed may ye be," is the burden both of their closing songs and of the last speech of the choragus. And when, with harpings and a sweetly solemn chant, there enters a procession of torch-bearers, and maidens with long, streaming hair, and sacred urns on their shoulders, escorting an old priest, they, too, join in, and the judges and citizens reappear, and thrice circling round the altar all move away, close friends, down towards the cave which the Furies, henceforth "well-minded", are to inhabit. Athene is left alone, a glorious figure, showing in her pose and dress how steeped in Greek art-culture these Girton girls have got to be. Miss Case looked, indeed, "a daughter of the gods, divinely tall and most divinely fair." Alas! to think of one who has posed as Athene ever coming to wear a dress-improver, and a swan-bill corset, and high-heeled shoes. Verily, Girton ought to invent some permanent costume in which girls may look "beautiful for ever", without giving in to the absurdities of the fashion-books. But, then, unhappily, even Athene's garb would not suit everybody; a dumpy woman would look as awkward in a goddess's robes as she used to do in crinoline.

Such was the latest Cambridge play; and no wonder it kept full houses in rapt attention from beginning to end. And the audience was not composed exclusively of dons and undergrads, remember. At most of the performances there were plenty of townspeople, to whom the Greek—even though helped out by the English on the other page—must have been a sore puzzle; parsons from a distance with their wives; ladies young and old; one heard of the masters of Rugby, and even of far-off Charterhouse, coming in a body. It is a pity there was not a better theatre. The old Athenians sat under the blue sky of Hellas—with an awning when the sun grew too hot—and had glimpses of the blue sea, and of the hills, and olive-groves. We cannot place our Cambridge actors in such favourable surroundings; but we can ask them to come to London, and ensure

them better quarters than they have at home and a hearty welcome if they do come.

DOGS AND DOG LAWS.

MANKIND may be roughly divided into two classes—those who keep dogs and those who do not—and, in a general way, their sympathies with the canine race or their antipathies thereto are pretty equally divided. If only dogs would not go mad, there would be little to urge as a set-off against their qualities as the most amiable and agreeable of companions and friends. The dogs, indeed, might urge that it is no fault of theirs; that madness is not, with them, brought on by physical excesses, by ill-controlled passions, by ill-judged alliances, or by any of those various causes which produce lunacy in their masters. As far as we know, hydrophobia is never spontaneously engendered in a dog; some other dog bites him, and then his sufferings begin, for the dog himself suffers terribly, as well as his victims. But even then there is a considerable space of time during which the dog gives warning, by his altered manners, that something is amiss with him. He refuses to eat, although, contrary to the received notion, he is even greedy after water. His dejected appearance and morose ways should be a caution to his owner to put him under restraint, and seek the advice of a veterinary surgeon. Indeed, if all dogs were properly looked after and cared for, canine madness would probably be unknown. But in all large towns there are dangerous classes among the dogs as well as among the human population—dogs who attend every skirmish and dog-fight in the neighbourhood; whose delight it is to bark and bite in an indiscriminate manner, and who, if they are once affected by the fatal virus, become at once active propagators of it far and wide.

If dogs had their chroniclers, the 10th of December, on which day the police edict providing for a general muzzling of the tribe came into effect in London, would be marked as a day of general tribulation. You might hear dogs barking everywhere—in cellars, under railway-arches, among the mews of more fashionable neighbourhoods, in the drawing-rooms of the wealthy, in the tenements of the poor—dogs who had been accustomed to a certain amount of liberty, and who resented the loss of it.

And what a comical figure was presented by those who, duly provided with muzzles, were permitted to take their walks abroad! A fashionable black poodle, daintily stepping along Regent Street, conscious of the ridiculous figure it made with its little wire snout, was especially noticeable; and a great Dane, with his head in a kind of helmet, reminded one of nothing so much as the mythical hog in armour. And then the people who had elected the alternative of leading their dogs, or, as it generally happened, being led by them! The sight of a middle-aged and studious-looking lady in spectacles following hither and thither the gambols of a lively young collie, as he skirmished round the lamp-post, over the crossing, and under the iron palisading, suggested a refined variety of punishment for a new edition of the *Inferno*. The ironmongers' shops, too, were thronged with applicants for the regulation muzzle, while the dogs who had come to be measured took advantage of their remaining moments of freedom to show their teeth at each other, and attempt a last free-fight.

The official dog-catcher was not, however, put prominently forward—a being to frighten children with; greaved and gloved, with his iron rod and running noose, the doormaster of the dogs. Such an official was not unknown years ago, by the way, in country towns—a man who performed the last offices for the dogs of the neighbourhood, and as much execrated by the canine fraternity as was the hangman in old times by the mob of the period. How the dogs knew him as the destroyer of their kind, it is hard to say; but know him they did, and his passage through the high street was the signal for the wildest excitement on the part of all the dogs of the town.

It may be doubted whether the dogs of London are capable of such associated action. The metropolis is so cut up and divided, and the barriers of social caste are so rigid, that we may not look for a common feeling among its canine denizens. That there is no strong local feeling among London dogs is shown by the peaceful way in which country dogs are allowed to pass through the streets, as in the case of the dogs which follow the country carts loaded with produce for Covent Garden and the Borough Market. But take a London dog into the country, and see if he is not set upon by every cur in the neighbourhood.

London, indeed, has long been the Alsatia of dogs, in which they have enjoyed more exemption from official interference than perhaps in any other large town. The by-laws of most municipal towns, both here and on the Continent, generally contain pretty stringent regulations about dogs; although in deference to the mistaken impression that summer heats are productive of canine madness, these restrictions are often only enforced during the dog-days. But rabies seems to be the peculiar scourge of temperate climes, and of the dog in his character of household pet and companion. The disease is unknown among the dogs which form the beasts of burden of wandering tribes on the borders of the Polar seas. Such a disease indeed would probably lead to the destruction of whole races of nomads, for there would be no means of checking its ravages, and, deprived of their dogs, the nomads would helplessly succumb in their arduous struggle for existence. And in tropical climes, where the dog often deteriorates, loses his character, and becomes a mere scavenger and a byword of reproach, still he does not go mad.

The weak point about these municipal enactments is that the mad dog is as likely as not to belong to a district outside the limits to which they apply. The mad dog leaves his home, and begins to scour the country, driven by the terrible pangs of his disorder here and there. He is as often as not a stranger to the district where he commits his ravages. And then these local regulations are often unfairly irksome to owners of dogs, who are frequently decent and law-abiding citizens, who have paid a licence-duty to the State for the onerous privilege.

The most obvious remedy for this state of things, some people urge, would be an alteration in the conditions of the licence-tax on dogs. It has frequently been pointed out that the dogs themselves should be registered and numbered, and should bear upon their collars the official stamp and number. But the details of such a scheme would probably be found too complicated for the management of a Government department. The alternative is to hand over the dog-tax to the local budget, as is done in France, for instance, with a proviso that every dog must be registered in the parish or other local area where its master resides. Sheep-dogs, and other exempted dogs, should be registered and numbered also, paying a trifling

fee. It would be probably found that the police were the best agents for ensuring the due registration of all dogs and the issuing of licences, and for apprehending all wandering and unregistered dogs, while transfers and changes might be booked for a small additional fee.

But it would be a distinct loss to humanity if any permanent estrangement should ensue between man and dog after a faithful companionship of so many cycles of ages, during which the dog has rendered zealous and often inestimable services to his master. He supplies, too, an ideal kind of friendship, and fills the vacant heart with a sweet counterfeit of the love that has been missed or that has gone astray. His only fault as a companion is that he does not live long enough, and thus in the course of existence a dog-lover has so many sad partings. And yet how many people you see who in advancing age would be happier with the companionship of a dog, refuse to replace a favourite dog out of a kind of fond fidelity to his memory! And who has smoothed out the last bed of such a faithful friend without dropping many tears therein! As for the man who could throw the body of an old favourite upon a dunghill, you might believe him capable of any wickedness.

What a happy thing it will be for men and dogs if it turns out that M. Pasteur has actually discovered a cure for rabies, and the means of eventually extirpating the disease! To bring the deadly virus into subjection, and by inoculating patients therewith, to render them proof against the fell disease itself, is a bold and original idea, which, if successfully carried out, will entitle its author to the gratitude of humanity. And yet, as a precaution against future danger, few people would probably be found willing to undergo the process. There was a King of Cambay, it will be remembered, who, to preserve him from the arts of poisoners, was brought up from a child and nourished upon deadly drugs. As Hudibras has it:

The Prince of Cambay's daily food,
Is asp and basilisk and toad.

But although the system worked admirably as a preservative for the king, yet he became so impregnated with poison as to be a very dangerous companion. So fatal was he to his wives, that a constant supply had to be kept up after the fashion adopted by his brother monarch, Shahriar, in the Arabian Nights. It is not pretended, indeed, that an inoculated person would be

a real danger to his friends, but they might think so, and till the practice became common, the protected individual might find himself regarded with a little mistrust.

At a time when dogs, especially metropolitan dogs, are somewhat under a cloud, it may be well to recall some of the claims of our old friend to respect and esteem. Everyone remembers the dog of Ulysses, who died in greeting his master just returned from his long wanderings, and the story shows the consideration in which the dog was held in the heroic ages of Greece. The old Persians, too, held the dog in high esteem; to the Magians he was a sacred animal, the representative and friend of Ormuzd the Beneficent; and the great satraps were distinguished by their trains of hunting-dogs as was the King himself, and Xerxes set out for the conquest of Greece surrounded by a great bodyguard of faithful dogs. Those most highly esteemed by the Persians came from India so called, probably from the Bactrian regions, where the dog is still held in high repute. Captain Wood tells us that the old-fashioned Uzbek would think it no insult to be asked to sell his wife, but would resent an offer for his dog as an unpardonable affront; while among the border-tribes of Turkestan the epithet of dog-seller is one of the profoundest contempt. Indeed, the birthplace of nations is probably the original home of the dog, and when our Aryan ancestors began to migrate westwards from their ancient seats with their flocks and herds, they brought with them, no doubt, their fierce and faithful dogs, who have left their descendants in the big dogs of to-day—the English mastiff, the Pyrenean sheep-dog, the Albanian wolfhound. Ancient laws too record the estimation in which the dog was held. "A herd-dog that goes for the herd in the morning and follows them home at night is worth the best ox," say the ancient laws of Wales.

The best herd-dogs of the present day, perhaps, are the Breton sheep-dogs—rough, shaggy, uncouth—with an aspect as if they had a little of the blood of Bruin in their veins, but highly valued by their possessors, who are not to be tempted into parting with them by anything under the price of the best ox; and the Breton dog is one of the most sagacious of his kind, watching and tending his flocks with an almost incredible zeal and devotion.

The Welsh sheep-dog of the present day is rather a currish kind of animal; a

useful servant, but little regarded, who is generally left to shift for himself. His cousin, the collie, is far handsomer and more intelligent, but not so good for his work, it is said, being too fiery and fussy—faults that stick to him in the streets of London, where the fashion for collies, which began soon after the Crimean war, has done much to discredit the London dog. For the collie is too quick-tempered to stand teasing by "fiends in the shape of boys", and always retains some of his original wildness. But the retriever is the greatest culprit of all; not only is he uncertain in temper, but he is more subject to rabies than dogs in general; and, with many charming qualities, he is not well adapted for town life.

It might be thought that with all the pains, penalties, trouble, and vexation that owners of dogs are subject to, the keeping of dogs as domestic pets would be largely discontinued. So people may think who do not keep dogs, but the other half of mankind are not likely to give up their favourites for any such considerations. If they can't keep dogs in London, they will move away from it, and enterprising builders in the future, in advertising their new settlements, may add to the advantages offered of charming site and sanitary arrangements, the attractive announcement—"No dog laws."

STUDIES OF OVER THE WAY.

A HOUSE IN THE CLAPHAM ROAD.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

I NEVER was on speaking terms except with one of my opposite neighbours, and, strangely enough, he lived farther from me by at least five-and-twenty yards than did any of the others.

The Clapham Road, where I once tenanted for nearly three years the first-floor front of a certain Mrs. Gatch, is a wide and spacious thoroughfare, as London thoroughfares go. The street itself is broad, and there are good gardens in front of the houses on either side. Altogether, the distance intervening between my domicile and that of Mr. Caleb Pilgrim, the "over the way" with whom I am at present concerned, was so great, that I doubt whether I could have regarded him as an "over the way" at all, had I not been able to bring him within reasonable distance by the help of my binocular.

Mr. Caleb Pilgrim, like many suburban-

dwelling citizens, was an enthusiastic lover of flowers; and, of all his flowers, his hollyhocks were his peculiar delight and pride. For a long time before I made his acquaintance, I used to remark his avenue of towering plants, covered with blooms of all shades, from the palest pink to the deepest russet-purple. It happened that, one day, one of my nephews, who was, like Mr. Pilgrim, a devoted florist, sent me a basket of lovely flowers. Amongst them were some hollyhocks, which seemed to me as good as, if not better than, any I had seen in Mr. Pilgrim's garden; and that same evening, seeing my neighbour pottering about amongst his flower-beds, I walked over the road with a bunch of hollyhocks in my hand, and, having apologised for my intrusion, asked his opinion as to the merits of my specimens.

As Mr. Pilgrim turned over the piles of blossom there came into his eyes a look of jealousy and disappointment, which told me that he recognised the superiority of the flowers; but he did not say so. He merely remarked that they were very fine blooms, asked me to walk round his little place, and finally said he would like a little of the seed of the flowers I had shown him just by way of experiment.

I wrote to my nephew for some seed, and sent it over to Mr. Pilgrim. His next year's hollyhocks were finer than ever, and I found I had gained a friend by my trifling act of courtesy. It was a pleasant change to go over and have a chat with Mr. Pilgrim now and then; and, in the course of these chats, I learnt a good deal about Mr. Pilgrim's antecedents and his present mode of life. He had made his money in the colonies, and had finally pitched his tent in the Clapham Road, being firmly convinced that the air there was superior to that of any of the English seaside places, or of the so-called health-resorts of the Continent. Mr. Pilgrim would gladly have spent his life in the Clapham Road undisturbed over his flowers. He wanted no more change than to go from the front-garden to the back, and vice versa; but this was not Mrs. Pilgrim's view. If she could not go to Scarborough, like Mrs. Johnson; or to Folkestone, like Mrs. Thompson; or up the Rhine, like Mrs. Jackson, she was determined to go somewhere. She did not much care where she went; but she would not stop in town all through August and September. She had quite made up her mind on that point.

So Pilgrim, by the way of having flowers

always about him, some three years before this, had made a compromise, and taken a country cottage, furnished, for the summer months, and often he regaled me with accounts of the troubles which had befallen him thereanent. To judge from his experience, it seemed that, if one wanted to get into difficulties, one could not do better than take a furnished country house. One summer, Mr. Pilgrim hired the charming cottage ornée of Mrs. Colonel Bilkington, on the Surrey hills. Mrs. Bilkington was all smiles and affability; such a delightful person that Mr. Pilgrim felt like a brute as he handed her the agreement which tied and bound her to do this and not to do that. Mrs. Bilkington was sure that between Mr. Pilgrim and herself no agreement was necessary; still, as a matter of form, she supposed it must be done. It was done, and, when the end of the tenancy came, Mr. Pilgrim found that he was done likewise, for Mrs. Bilkington's china, and ornaments, and fragile ware seemed to have been constructed like conjurors' properties, for they fell to pieces of themselves in a most mysterious manner in the latter days of Mr. Pilgrim's stay, and when Mrs. Bilkington came to check the inventory—she did not leave such work to be done by deputy—almost everything seemed to be more or less broken. Poor Mr. Pilgrim, as he paid the bill for breakages, did not find the lady's manner so charming as of yore, and, when he took his leave, he shook the dust of Cintra Cottage off his feet for ever.

Then, the next year, he hired a pretty rectory in the Thames Valley. The rector, the Rev. Theophilus Rubicle, was, as far as outward seeming went, a jovial, hearty priest, something of the Friar Tuck build. At the first interview he declared that he was prepared to leave the house just as it was, should he and Mr. Pilgrim come to terms, so great was the confidence with which Mr. Pilgrim's manner and appearance had inspired him. There was the piano, which would be left open. There was a cow, and there were the hens, who should furnish milk and eggs for the Pilgrim breakfast-table, and, lastly, there was a pony and chaise, which he would leave for Mr. Pilgrim's use under the charge of a careful man.

The rectory looked bright and pleasant enough the afternoon they arrived. There was a nice little dinner prepared, and the next morning the new-laid eggs on the table, and the cream in the jug, showed that the hens and the cow had fulfilled

their part of the contract. The careful man came, touching his hat, to the breakfast-room window and asked whether there were any orders about the carriage to-day. A glow of pleasurable pride awoke in Mr. Pilgrim's spirit as he listened to the request, and he told the careful man he thought they would take a little drive in the afternoon.

They went for a drive every afternoon for about a week, as the weather was abnormally fine. At the end of that time Mr. Pilgrim began to think that either the local roads must be very trying, or that the construction of Mr. Rubicle's carriage must be very delicate, for after every drive the careful man would come in and say that the spokes in one of the fore-wheels were loose, or that the shaft was sprung, or that the stuffing in the back seat wanted renewing. Mr. Pilgrim bore it patiently for a week, but then he began to see that, as things were going on, Mr. Rubicle's carriage would be entirely renewed by the end of a month, so the afternoon drives were given up. Then the hens suddenly left off laying and the cow went dry, as she always did, according to the careful man's account, at that particular season. For the first day or so a dish of strawberries graced the dinner-table, but these were soon replaced by some very wormy raspberries, and when Mrs. Pilgrim remonstrated at this falling-off, the careful man informed her that all the strawberries had been preserved by Mr. Rubicle's order for his own use. Thus by degrees the gilt was rubbed off the gingerbread; but it was not until the final audit came that Mr. Pilgrim discovered how well up in the art of letting a furnished house was the simple priest with whom he had to deal. Mr. Rubicle, accompanied by the careful man, went round the house and premises, and turned out of all sorts of unnoticed corners a motley collection of rickety forms and chairs, damaged crockery, worn-out brooms, and tubs and buckets in the last stage of dissolution. These, Mr. Rubicle remarked, turning with a smile to a clause in the agreement, Mr. Pilgrim was bound to make good; but in order to save trouble, Mr. Rubicle would give a full acquittance for all damage in consideration of an extra cheque for twenty-five pounds.

Mr. Pilgrim returned to the Clapham Road well nigh sick of country houses. So loud and deep were his objurgations against all who let them that I was rather surprised to hear from him at the end of last June

that he was going to tempt fortune once more in a little place called The Pines, in a perfect situation about forty miles from town. Mr. Pilgrim gave me so glowing a description of this last venture that I was almost disposed to accept his invitation to visit him there, though I had not slept out of London for thirty years. But the force of habit was too strong, and I decided to await his return and hear whether the later experience was worthy of the early promise.

At the beginning of October Mr. Pilgrim returned, an altered man. When I went over to see him, and ask him how he had enjoyed his outing, he smiled a faint smile, and took refuge in some generality. I led up to the subject again and again, but always in vain. His manner at last became so peculiar that I grew certain there was some mystery at the back of this reserve. I determined to lay the matter before Simpson the next time he called, and to ask him to find out for me an explanation of Mr. Pilgrim's altered mood. The very next day he made his appearance. I placed the details of the business before him, told him the name of the village in which The Pines was situated, and bade him go and ascertain what there was in the place to have sent Mr. Pilgrim back to town with the air of a man who had forged a will or committed a murder instead of the happy-looking, open-faced gentleman he was when he left town.

In less than a week he came back with the following story:

"I do not wonder that your friend was taken with The Pines, for a prettier little residence I never saw. It must originally have been a very cosy cottage, and the present owner has built a drawing-room on one side, and a smoking-room on the other, he has patched on porches and verandahs wherever he could find room, and thrown out bay-windows in all the principal rooms. The flower-gardens around it are just what English flower-gardens should be; it is covered from ground to eaves with roses and flowering creepers of all sorts. Beyond the garden is a sloping pasture, at the foot of which runs a little stream just big enough for a boat, and at the back rises a wooded hill, sufficiently high to keep off the northern winds. It gives one the idea of being something more than a mere 'summer residence'. The verandahs must be cool and grateful during the brief spell of heat, and the casements fit perfectly, and the stoves radiate well. These latter

virtues Mr. Pilgrim no doubt appreciated when there came that bit of January which nowadays always falls upon us unprepared in the middle of July. The landlord left for the tenant's use a pretty little pony-carriage, a smart brougham, a pony, and a horse, two excellent cows, and a yard full of poultry. The garden was full of fruit, ripe and ripening, and for the first week Mr. and Mrs. Pilgrim ate strawberries and cream four times a day.

"But all the above-named excellencies faded into nothingness and paled their ineffectual fires, when compared with two other treasures which your friends found left for their use. They found a perfect cook, and a man-servant who seemed to combine all the virtues one hopes to find in an honest steward, a careful groom, a sober butler, and a clever valet. Timbury—for he was so called—was not only able to do everything that anyone expects to be done by steward, groom, butler, or valet. He was always ready and eager to show his efficiency. One morning a couple of delicious trout were served up for breakfast. They were two which Timbury had taken out of the stream the night before. He could concoct the most wonderful salads, and the most seductive summer drinks. In short, if I were to give you a catalogue of his virtues, I should have no time to tell you the rest of my story.

"Mr. Pilgrim spent much of his time in the garden, but somehow he could not get out of the flower-beds at The Pines the same amount of pleasure that he could out of the narrow strips of garden in the Clapham Road. He felt a trifle lonely at times from the want of neighbours and of that bi-weekly trip to the City on the top of a 'bus, so he used to chat very often with Timbury as that person was polishing the plate or folding the napkins.

"You knows Jamaiky, I see, sir," said Timbury one morning. "I took the liberty of looking at the Kingston 'Erald, as was layin' on the library-table, seein' as I was once a reglar subscriber to the journal."

"Oh, you know Jamaica, do you?" said Mr. Pilgrim.

"Oh yes, sir; I was born there, owin' to my father bein' a store-keeper's clerk; but I never liked the place, and as soon as I could do for myself I comed 'ome."

"And when did you leave the island, Timbury?" said Mr. Pilgrim.

"It were in 1843, sir, and I was very near leaving this world as well, for I was

steward on board the Sarah Jarvis, of London, which ship, you may remember, went down at sea on the voyage home."

"As Timbury mentioned the name of the Sarah Jarvis, Mr. Pilgrim started slightly, and looked up with an expression of awakened interest.

"The Sarah Jarvis?" he said; "I thought she foundered, and that not a soul on board escaped?"

"She went down right enough, sir; but nine of us was saved in the long-boat, and was picked up by a barque bound for Rio."

"Mr. Pilgrim put down the newspaper and walked to the window. There was a look of something like consternation on his face.

"But my—but I knew someone on board her," said Mr. Pilgrim; "had you any of the passengers in the long boat, Timbury?"

"We had, sir. Five or six—I'm not sure which; anyhow, I remember there was two ladies, one of 'em young, and the other a little middle-aged."

"Two ladies, had you? And what were their names?" said Mr. Pilgrim, turning a little pale and fidgetting nervously with his watch-chain.

"Indeed, I can't say, sir. I was very bad with fever all the time from the sun, and after I was put ashore at Rio I was delirious for a fortnight. I remember very little except the loss of the ship, and being hauled up out of the boat into the vessel which saved us. I know there was a fat man named Bowker, and Jack Hoskins, my mate, in the boat with us; but I clean forget the names of the rest."

"Mr. Pilgrim walked away in a meditative mood, and he did not again allude to the story of Timbury's shipwreck, much as he had been interested by the first account of it. A week or so after this conversation, he was sitting in the morning-room, nodding over the Times, when Timbury entered, bearing a card on a salver. Mr. Pilgrim was a little surprised at the prospect of a caller, for the clergy and gentry round about The Pines had up to the present studiously ignored his presence. He took up the card, and read on it the words, 'Mrs. Scrymgeour Campion.'

"The lady has got an order from the London agents to look over the place, sir. I told her it was let for the summer, but she says she is after buying it," said Timbury. "Of course, I explained to her as

you had no call to let nobody see over it, and she replied as she was perfectly aware of that, but the agents had told her you was not the gentleman to go out of your way to disoblige a lady.'

"'Oh dear me! and I suppose she'll want me to trot round with her, and answer all the hundred-and-one questions fussy women always ask, and go all over the gardens in this baking sun. I wish——'

"'I told her as you was engaged, sir, and said I would take her round, so there's no need for you to show yourself at all unless you wish.'

"'You told her that, Timbury, did you? Very thoughtful of you, I'm sure. You take her to the dining-room and drawing-room first, and, as soon as you're upstairs, I'll slip over into the drawing-room. Then you can come here, and finish off with the kitchens.'

"Timbury bowed and retired, and the next minute Mr. Pilgrim heard the rustle of a dress in the hall, and a rather harsh voice asking the stock questions about the subsoil, the drains, the water-supply, and whether the chimneys smoked. As the voice mounted into the upper regions he scuttled across the hall, and retreated to the remotest corner of the drawing-room, meaning to get a glimpse, if possible, at Mrs. Campion as she inspected the flower-garden. The voice came downstairs again, and then Mr. Pilgrim, having let down the Venetian-blinds, and arranged one of them so as to give a full view of the garden, took up his post of observation.

"The window was open, and he soon heard the voice, and another voice as well, which he recognised as Mrs. Pilgrim's. She, good lady, had been surprised in her bedroom, and, feeling rather lonely, had willingly offered to go round with the stranger and point out to her the excellencies and the defects of The Pines as a place of residence. Mr. Pilgrim raised his eye-glasses to take stock of Mrs. Serymgeour Campion as she came along the gravel-path. She was a stout, florid dame with a very commonplace type of face; but, commonplace or not, the contemplation of it seemed to affect Mr. Pilgrim in the most

extraordinary fashion. His mouth opened, for his jaw had fallen with an expression of the most abject terror. His face first became ashy-white, and then as green as the Venetian-blinds through which he was gazing. He clung to a chair for support, but he had still enough command over himself to put his ear close to the window to catch, if possible, the conversation between Mrs. Campion and his wife.

"'I am infinitely obliged, my dear madam. Your servant says that your husband is engaged, so I won't disturb him now; but I should like to see him before I decide.'

"'I wish you would stop to dinner,' said Mrs. Pilgrim, holding the lady's hand in her own. 'My husband would be delighted to see you.'

"Mr. Pilgrim gave a hollow groan as he listened, and fell back in the armchair. But he could not rest there. He started up, and went and locked himself in his own room. Mrs. Pilgrim was puzzled to know what could ail her husband at dinner that evening. The dinner was one after his own heart, but he sent away everything untasted, and sat staring at the flower-vase in front of him, with a look upon his face such as she had never seen before. She did her best to keep up the conversation by talking about their late visitor, but she could get no response of any kind from her husband, so she was fain to address a few side observations on the same subject to Timbury, who agreed that the lady was a remarkably pleasant-spoken lady, and one, at the same time, as would not let herself be put upon.

Now Publishing, price Sixpence,

THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER

OF
ALL THE YEAR ROUND,

WHICH CONSISTS OF A COMPLETE STORY,

BY WALTER BESANT,

AUTHOR OF "THE CAPTAINS' ROOM," "A GLORIOUS FORTUNE," ETC.,

Entitled,

"SELF OR BEARER."

May be had of all Newsagents, and at Railway Bookstalls.

The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND is reserved by the Authors.